

Written Testimony for the  
Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Health and Hospitals

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Dear Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee,

I wish to submit comments to this important committee that reflect on the value of the Connecticut Mental Health Center (CMHC) and how the proposed cuts from the DMHAS budget undermine the integrity of a great resource for both Connecticut and the country itself. I ask you consider the following comments and consider restoring full support for clinical and research programming at CMHC.

As a citizen of New Haven city and former physician at CMHC, I can attest to the exquisite care that is provided by the center for the community of patients suffering from mental illnesses. It is a tremendous resource that provides world-class quality of care from Yale physicians to the most needy of our population. It has been an icon in the community in that regard.

As a Chief Medical Officer at a fledgling biotech company in Connecticut, I can attest to the world-class quality of research that has emanated from CMHC. For example, the first studies on the role of glutamate in depression came from work here, work that has prompted an avalanche of research in the pharmaceutical industry to exploit these initial findings for the purpose of developing novel treatments. In fact, my own biotech company is founded on intellectual property that originated at CMHC and the Yale Department of Psychiatry. While in its early stages, Biohaven Pharmaceuticals exemplifies the economic growth that a strong CMHC can engender.

The support for the clinical and research missions of CMHC is critical. Without a strong clinical presence, New Haven's most needy would likely drain more substantial resources as their decline would ultimately result in more intensive public burdens. The research unit of CMHC is unique insofar as it provides a venue for the most innovative research in the country and research with clearly practical application - as exemplified by the existence of my own company. The CMHC research unit combined with intellectual contribution from the country's leading department of Psychiatry provides a formidable instrument for the long-term amelioration of mental illness.

With utmost respect, I urge the Committee to fully restore the CMHC budget.

Sincerely,

Robert Berman, M.D.